

APPEAL LETTER TO POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION

November 3, 2011

Ms. Ruth Y. Goldway, Chairman
Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268-0001

Received

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POSTAL REGULATORY
COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

SUBJECT: Viola, Idaho Post Office Closure
Office of PAGR

Dear Chairman Goldway:

The Postal Service has posted the Final Determination to close the Viola, Idaho post office and extend the service by Rural Route service. The Moscow post office and Rural Carrier will provide our service. The Moscow office is nine miles from the Viola post office. Many of the rural folks live several miles from the Viola post office and would have to commute twenty miles or more to the Moscow post office.

The attached list, containing signatures of customers served by the Viola Idaho post office, do not feel that the alternate service offered by the Postal Service is acceptable as it does not provide a maximum degree of regular and effective service that customers are entitled to in accordance with federal law. Federal law prohibits the Postal Service from permanently closing a small post office just to save dollars. (Under Title 39, United States Code 404(b) any decision to close or consolidate a post office must be based on certain criteria not dollars).

We do not believe closing our post office and providing delivery and retail service by a rural carrier meets the requirements of the above-mentioned rule. It is very inconvenient for customers to purchase money orders/stamps and sending/receiving accountable mail such as registered and certified mail. We are also concerned about vandalism, theft of our mail, and identity theft.

The decision has been made to combine our post office with the Moscow, Idaho post office and we strongly oppose this action. The postmaster plays an important role in our community, especially for elderly and infirm. Many of our residents do not drive or even have a checking account and they will be hit hard by this decision because our postmaster assists them in meeting their obligations. Our postmaster helps them pay bills, write money orders and provides other postal duties.

Our post office represents the federal government to our residents and it is hard for us to understand the reasoning, especially when the final determination came in the middle of the construction of a handicapped project at the Viola post office, by the Postal Service. This project has an estimated cost of \$20,000 and it adds further confusion and concern that the decision is inappropriate. We understand that the Postal Service has financial issues but isn't it against the law to close a post office just to save money? How can the federal government spend billions of dollars in an attempt to create jobs and then a branch of the federal government eliminates vital jobs in small towns? Rural America is just as important as urban America. A post office in urban America may be a luxury and a convenience but in rural America a post office is a necessity and we are proud to see our flag flying over our post office every day.

Sincerely,

Patrons of the Viola, Idaho, Post Office
Zip 83872 (If questions call 208-883-3423)

Enc. Supporting documents
cc. U. S. Senators and Congressmen
Representing Idaho

U.S. MAIL VIOLA, ID. 83872

VIOLA, ID. 83872

SINCE 1875



What do I do if my package is delayed?
If your package is delayed, you can track it online or call 1-800-ASK-USA.

PRIORITY MAIL
First-Class Package Service

POST OFFICE WINDOW HOURS
Monday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Tuesday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Wednesday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Thursday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Friday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Closed Sunday and Holidays

MAIL COLLECTION TIMES
First-Class Package Service
Priority Mail
Priority Mail Express

DAILY NEWS
PUBLISHED DAILY
EXCEPT SUNDAY AND HOLIDAYS

EMERGENCY PHONE
POLICE
FIRE

Attachment #1

**FINAL DETERMINATION CLOSURE OF THE VIOLA,
IDAHO, POST OFFICE**

**PETITIONS SIGNED BY VIOLA
POST OFFICE PATRONS**

APPEAL PETITION TO SAVE THE VIOLA, IDAHO POST OFFICE

WE IN THE VIOLA, IDAHO 83872 COMMUNITY, HEREBY APPEAL THE CLOSURE OF OUR 100 YEAR OLD PLUS POST OFFICE BY THE US POSTAL SERVICE.

We believe the numbers used in making the final determination (Docket Number 1386031-83872) for the closure are not accurate.

Numbers relied on, including, the wages paid out, the benefits paid out for the employee and the annual lease are not accurate, nor do they match the actual expenses. The annual savings are also inaccurate and do not take into account the cost of replacing the infrastructure that is now in place. This closure will inconvenience residents and encourage the rural patrons to move further into the use of computers and the services of UPS and Fed EX thus causing even less revenue

Along with this petition we will be sending attachments and exhibits to support our position.

Name	Address - Zip Code	Phone
<u>Khaliea Wright</u>		
<u>Debbie Goetz</u>		
<u>Terry Weber</u>		
<u>Brian Hall</u>		
<u>CS / H / K / H</u>		
<u>Barbara L. Hagelorn</u>		
<u>Marie Meloy</u>		
<u>James M. Schaff</u>		
<u>Anita L. Schaff</u>		
<u>Jim Schaff</u>		
<u>Deborah L. Wolcott</u>		
<u>Deborah D. Casler</u>		
<u>Julie Lockard</u>		
<u>Rachel Porter</u>		
<u>Angela W. Porter</u>		
<u>Wendy Elmore</u>		
<u>James J. Felt</u>		

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Name	Address - Zip Code	Phone
<u>DENT GLOW</u>		
<u>Orion Acres</u>		
<u>ANDY VOTTELS</u>		
<u>Bob B.</u>		
<u>Wesley RASH</u>		
<u>Lee Bunker</u>		
<u>Gene Bule</u>		
<u>Cathy Hanson</u>		
<u>Edith Gray</u>		
<u>KATHI GRAY</u>		
<u>SUSIE SCHORZMAN</u>		
<u>Liz Schorzman</u>		
<u>RICHARD STRONGONI</u>		
<u>DEBORA SUTTON</u>		
<u>Naren K. FALKE</u>		
<u>JOHN KIMBROW</u>		
<u>SAM KIMBROW</u>		

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Name	Address – Zip Code	Phone
Jan Sawyer		
Gillen Aheas		
Earlene Aheas		
William Tai		
GARY SHIREY		
Chris Fleener		
Glenn Newton		
Louise Colson		
Donna Hall		
Tom Tom		
ROB KEATING		
Tanya Volk		
Louise Bierce		
Jim Bierce		
Don Hutches		
Deanna J. Vance		
Dave Vance		

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Name	Address – Zip Code	Phone
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<u>Linda Robinson</u>		
<u>Mike Elvander</u>		
<u>Richard R. Corp</u>		
<u>John D. Dunning</u>		
<u>Kim Boutin</u>		
<u>Francis L. Byrnes</u>		
<u>R. Wayne Davis</u>		
<u>Alfredy Bouma</u>		
<u>Reda Fendy</u>		
<u>Carol J. Clark</u>		
<u>Y. L. L.</u>		
<u>CHRISTINA BALDWIN</u>		
<u>Tod Cassell</u>		
<u>Douglas Boyd Jackson</u>		
<u>Thomas J. Webb</u>		
<u>Don C. Gray</u>		
<u>Pat Rott</u>		

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Name	Address – Zip Code	Phone
<u>Kinda Hardy</u>		
<u>Deane R. Albright</u>		
<u>Pete Voth</u>		
<u>Michael A. Hollier</u>		
<u>Dorothy M. Prillewitt</u>		
<u>Adrian Hays</u>		
<u>John R. Hays</u>		
<u>Don Hays</u>		
<u>Thomas A. Spangley</u>		
<u>Michael A. Spangley</u>		
<u>Sharon K. Zentz</u>		
<u>Patricia J. Peck</u>		
<u>Don Connor</u>		
<u>Don Connor</u>		
<u>Patricia Stewart</u>		
<u>Dolly Musick</u>		
<u>H.L. Musick</u>		

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Name	Address – Zip Code	Phone
<u>Elaine Musick</u>		
<u>Roger Stewart</u>		
<u>Vera Milosh</u>		
<u>Johnny Johnson</u>		
<u>David J. Nordesty</u>		
<u>Harold Musick</u>		
<u>Margaret A. Greenbaum</u>		
<u>Alvin Larson</u>		
<u>Bob Larson</u>		
<u>Calvin Perillo</u>		
<u>Dave Huggins</u>		
<u>Elizabeth Lusby</u>	<u>Charles Lusby</u>	
<u>Jay Lusby</u>		
<u>Tracy Stenlund</u>		
<u>Jonathan Allen</u>		
<u>Ben Bayley</u>		
<u>Betha Elliott</u>		

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Name	Address – Zip Code	Phone
<u>Leslie A. Elberson</u>		
<u>Georgia M. Hildner</u>		
<u>Donald M. Isham</u>		
<u>Lee McCoy</u>		
<u>Kathleen McCoy</u>		
<u>William J. Jackson</u>		
<u>Martha Lindahl</u>		
<u>Mari Quist</u>		
<u>Ann Balling</u>		
<u>David Reed</u>		
<u>C. MIKE REID</u>		
<u>R.B. OLSON</u>		
<u>Flaine Wright</u>		
<u>Wm L. Chahey</u>		
<u>CAROLYN HOKIN</u>		
<u>Judith T. Parrish</u>		
<u>Pamela A. Alsterlund</u>		

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Name	Address - Zip Code	Phone
Kenneth W Alsklund		
Steve Weber		
Diana Renfro		
Doug Renfro		
Annita Limer		
Don Fenner		
William Demell		
Louise Grinnell		
John P. Brown		
M. HARRISON		
Dennis C Colson		
Marilyn Hillested		
Roy Brayles		
William Donohue		
John Donohue		
James Hays		
Kathleen C. Dill		

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Name	Address – Zip Code	Phone
1. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
2. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
3. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
4. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
5. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
6. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
7. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
8. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
9. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
10. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
11. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
12. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
13. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
14. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
15. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
16. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
17. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
18. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
19. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>
20. <u>Mr. J. Smith</u>	<u>123 Main St. - 10001</u>	<u>555-1234</u>

Name

Address – Zip Code

Phone

Paul Koers
Carol Koers
Daniel Hansen
Paul Koers
Shirley Koers
Ron Koers

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[illegible]

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[illegible]

ATTACHMENT #2
ECONOMIC DOLLAR SAVINGS LISTED IN THE FINAL DETERMINATION CLOSURE OF
THE VIOLA POST OFFICE MATERIALS

Posted is the inaccurate estimated annual dollar savings for the Viola post office.

<u>Postal service estimate.</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Postmaster salary	\$23,025.00-----\$24,500.00
Fringe benefits	\$7,713.00----- -0-
Annual lease cost	\$3,418.00-----\$3,600.00

Less annual replace cost. They claim minus \$5,283.00. There can be no savings as the rural carrier is working 10 hours a day now, and he is at capacity on the route. You add the work that is done in the post office of sorting mail, stamps, registered mail, UPS package service, money orders and all the services that go along with the post office plus an additional 54 boxes it will take another carrier approximately ½ day. The carrier makes \$50,000.00 plus benefits now. You add another ½ time carrier and it comes to \$25,000.00 plus benefits. Now instead of a savings of \$5,283.00 we have added, counting benefits aprox. \$20,000.00.

To keep the post office will cost \$28,100.00.

To close the Post office will cost loss of annual revenue. 1/2 of the \$26,782.00 and rising = \$13,000.00. Cost of replacing the postmaster \$20,000.00 = \$33,000.00. If you keep the post office open your cost is \$28,114.00. It will cost \$4886.00 more annually, if you close the post office.

Now the Postal Service talks of cluster boxes at a cost of \$6,000.00

Cost of putting in handicap access that won't be needed

if the post office is closed, \$20,000.00

Now we have additional expenses of \$26,000.00 if the post office is closed.

NOW IT LOOKS TO US LIKE IT IS COSTING THE POSTAL SERVICE \$30,000.00 JUST TO CLOSE THE POST OFFICE. The Post office is costing money to close. Where is the big savings?

Attachment #3

**FINAL DETERMINATION CLOSURE OF THE VIOLA, IDAHO, POST OFFICE
MATERIALS
EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES**

The Viola post office patrons are upset with the process the Postal Service used to inform the employee at Viola. The only notification that employee received was when she read the Final Determination papers delivered to all the patrons. It would seem only common employee practice to inform the employee before the patrons. If this is an indication of the service provided by the Postmaster of Moscow, Idaho, to the patrons that are to be incorporated from Viola it does not give us any confidence in the procedure.

Attachment #4

FINAL DETERMINATION CLOSURE OF THE VIOLA POST OFFICE PATRONS CONCERNS AND POSTAL SERVICE RESPONSE TO THOSE CONCERNS

IN THE ADVANTAGE AND DISADVANTAGES SECTION: THERE ARE NO ADVANTAGES. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A RURAL CARRIER TO TRAVEL GRAVEL, WET AND SLICK ROADS AND PROVIDE A GOOD REGULAR SERVICE, WORKING IN RAIN, SNOW OR SUMMER HEAT. THE TIME OF ARRIVAL DEPENDS ON AMOUNTS OF MAIL AND/OR WEATHER CONDITIONS.

THE RURAL CARRIER WILL BE FORCED INTO A MUCH LARGER GAS CONSUMING VEHICLE IN ORDER TO CARRY THE NEEDED SUPPLIES FOR THE POSTAL PATRONS. IF THE CARRIER DOES NOT HAVE THE PRODUCT HE WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE ORDER BACK TO MOSCOW POST OFFICE AND DELIVER IT THE FOLLING DAY. HAVING THE RURAL CARRIER HANDLE THE SERVICE IS NOT AN EFFICIENT WAY TO HANDLE THE POSTAL SERVICE BUSINESS.

USING THE MOSCOW POST OFFICE IS SOMETHING THAT MOST OF US TRY TO AVOID, AND IT IS NOT AN OPTION FOR SOME OF THE AGED, INFIRM, AND/OR DISABLED. YES, SOME PATRONS WORK IN MOSCOW, BUT TRYING TO GET ANYTHING DONE BETWEEN 11 A.M. AND 2 P.M. OR 4 P.M. TO 6 P.M. IN THE MOSCOW POST OFFICE (ASSUMING YOU FIND A PARKING SPACE IN THE CROWED LOT) IS A 30 TO 45 MINUTE WAIT, STANDING IN LINE, TO GET TO THE COUNTER.

WE DO NOT NEED TO DRIVE TO MOSCOW POST OFFICE WHEN WE HAVE OUR POSTAL NEEDS AVAILABLE IN VIOLA. THE VIOLA RURAL AREA IS ONE OF THE FASTER GROWING AREAS IN LATAH COUNTY, IDAHO.

THERE ARE AT LEAST 17 SMALL BUSINESS PATRONS LOCATED WITHIN ONE AND ONE HALF MILES OF THE VIOLA POST OFFICE. IT IS NOT REALISTIC TO ADD THE EXTRA TRANSPORTATION COST TO THEIR BUSINESS EXPENSES. MOST SMALL BUSINESS PATRONS ARE REQUIRED TO SEND MONEY ORDERS, HAVE SHIPMENTS THAT ARRIVE COD, HAVE CERTIFIED MAIL, REGISTERED MAIL AND INSURED MAIL ETC.

AGAIN HAVING THE RURAL CARRIER HANDLE THESE SERVICES IS NOT AN EFFICIENT WAY TO HANDLE THE POSTAL SERVICE BUSINESS.

AMERICANS WANT THEIR POST OFFICE TO REMAIN OPEN, AND EVEN IN THIS ELECTRONIC AGE, THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION WHO NEED THEIR CONVENIENT, LOCAL POST OFFICE. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE POSTAL SERVICE MUST LOOK AT WAYS TO ADAPT TO A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT, BUT CLOSING THE ONLY POST OFFICE WITHIN A SEVERAL MILE AREA IS COUNTER PRODUCTIVE.

Date of Posting: 10/14/2011

Date of Removal: 11/15/2011

FINAL DETERMINATION TO CLOSE
THE VIOLA, ID POST OFFICE
AND EXTEND
SERVICE BY RURAL ROUTE SERVICE

DOCKET NUMBER 1386031 - 83872

I. RESPONSIVENESS TO COMMUNITY POSTAL NEEDS

The Postal Service is issuing the final determination to close the Viola, ID Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the Moscow Post Office, located seven miles away. Service will be provided to cluster box units (CBUs).

CBUs are secure free-standing units of individually locked mail compartments installed and maintained by the Postal Service at no cost to the customer. A parcel locker may also be installed.

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster retired on August 31, 2003. Since the postmaster vacancy an OIC has been installed to operate the office. Postmaster level and office service hours are determined by a workload analysis which includes the number of deliveries and revenue.

The office was studied for possible closing or consolidation due to the following reasons. Viola earns under two work hours per day. The Postal Service can provide regular and effective service from the Moscow ID Main Post Office 7 miles south via rural route carrier. Retail service is also available at the Palouse WA Post Office 6 miles to the northwest. Many Viola customer commute to Moscow ID for work and shopping.

The Viola Post Office, an EAS-55 level, provides service from 10:00 - 16:00 Monday - Friday, 10:00 - 16:00 Saturday and lobby hours of 24 on Monday - Friday and 24 on Saturday to 54 post office box or general delivery customers and no delivery customers. Retail services included the sale of stamps, stamped paper, and money orders, special services such as Registered Mail, Certified Mail, Insured Mail, COD Mail, and Express Mail services, and the acceptance and dispatch of all classes of mail.

The retail window averaged nine transaction(s) accounting for 10 minute(s) of retail workload daily. With minimal workload, the Postal Service feels that effective and regular service will be provided by rural route service. Office receipts for the last 3 years were: \$26,098 (68 revenue units) in FY 2008; \$26,618 (69 revenue units) in FY 2009; and \$26,782 (70 revenue units) in FY 2010. There were one permit mailer(s) or postage meter customer(s).

On June 23, 2011, representatives from the Postal Service were available at the Federal Building, 220 E. 5th St, Moscow ID 83843 to answer questions and provide information to customers. 21 customer(s) attended the meeting.

On June 08, 2011, 225 questionnaires were distributed to delivery customers of the Viola Post Office. Questionnaires were also available over the counter for retail customers at the Viola Post Office. 82 questionnaires were returned. Responses regarding the proposed alternate service were as follows: 1 favorable, 69 unfavorable, and 12 expressed no opinion.

When this final determination is implemented, delivery and retail services will be provided by the Moscow Post Office, an EAS-21 level office. Window service hours at the Moscow Post Office are from 8:00-17:00, Monday through Friday, and 9:30-13:30 on Saturday. There are 316 post office boxes available.

Retail service is also available at the Palouse Post Office an EAS-15 level office, located six miles away. Window service hours at Palouse Post Office are from 8:00-11:30-12:30-16:30, Monday through Friday and on Saturday. There are 167 post office boxes available for rent.

The proposal to close the Viola Post Office was posted with an invitation for comment at the Viola Post Office, Palouse Post Office and Moscow Post Office from July 05, 2011 to September 05, 2011. The following additional concerns were received during the proposal posting period:

1. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about mailbox vandalism.

Response: This is a problem that is experienced in many communities. Customers may install a heavier gauge metal box or brick veneer a mail box to make it resistant to vandalism. Customers should report mailbox vandalism to the county sheriff.
2. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about the cost savings obtained by the Postal Service from the closure of Post Offices. Quoting the PRC which said if the Postal Service closed 1000 Post Offices, it would only save 0.7% of the postal budget.

Response: The Postal Service has developed and begun implementing a range of cost-reducing initiatives. These include consolidating operations, adjusting delivery routes, restructuring administrative and processing functions and closing district offices. We also have introduced several new products and services, including Priority Mail Flat Rate boxes and Adult Signature service, in an effort to grow revenue.
3. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about the inability of the rural carrier to weigh and rate letters and packages.

Response:

The rural carrier will accept any letters or packages up to 13 ounces for mailing. The carrier will estimate the cost and provide a receipt for any money received. On the following delivery day the carrier will provide change or a bill for the amount over the estimate.

4. Concern:

Customer expressed concern about a letter never reaching its destination.

Response:

We have no ability to respond to this concern.

5. Concern:

Customers expressed concern for those customers with disabilities who are not able to go to administrative Post Office to pick up their mail.

Response:

Customers are not required to travel to another Post Office to receive mail or obtain retail services. These services will be provided by the carrier to a roadside mailbox located close to customers' residences. In hardship cases, delivery can be made to the home of a customer. Changes in the type of delivery are considered where service by existing methods would impose an extreme physical hardship for an individual customer. Any request for a change in delivery method must be submitted in writing to the administrative postmaster.

6. Concern:

Customers expressed concern that postal employees at the administrative Post Office are rude.

Response:

Employee courtesy is always a concern of postal managers. Postal employees receive periodic instructions regarding employee courtesy. We do not condone our employees' execution of their duties in an unprofessional or discourteous manner. This concern will be conveyed to the postmaster by the Manager, Post Office Operations.

7. Concern:

Customers felt inclement weather and poor road conditions might impede delivery.

Response:

Both inclement weather and heavy mail volume can cause deviations from the normal delivery schedule. However, the carrier is required to provide a vehicle of adequate size, equipped with necessary equipment (chains or snow tires, warning lights or signs, etc.) to serve the route safely and efficiently and in accordance with federal, state, and local motor vehicle laws and regulations.

8. Concern:

Customers wanted to know why the customer lines were so long at the administrative Post Office.

Response:

The administrative Post Office serves a much larger community and has a heavier retail window workload. This concern has been brought to the attention of the administrative postmaster, window operations will be monitored to ensure that customers do not have an unreasonable wait to obtain services. The carrier can provide retail services, alleviating the need for customers to go to the Post Office for service.

9. Concern:

Customers were concerned about a possible address change.

Response:

There will be no change in customer addresses.

10. Concern:

Customers were concerned about having to travel to another Post Office for service.

Response:

Services provided at the Post Office will be available from the carrier, and customers will not have to travel to another Post Office for service. Most transactions do not require meeting the carrier at the mailbox. Stamps by Mail and Money Order Application forms are available for customer convenience. Stamps are also available at many stores and gas stations where customers may already shop, online at usps.com, or by calling 1-800-STAMP-24.

11. Concern:

Customers were concerned about mail security.

Response:

Customers may place a lock on their mailboxes. The mailbox must have a slot large enough to accommodate the customer's normal daily mail volume. The Postal Service does not open mailboxes which are locked and does not accept keys for this purpose.

12. Concern:

Customers were concerned about obtaining services from the carrier.

- Response:**
- The rural carrier provides all the services that are available at the Post Office with the exception of PO Box service and bulk mail acceptance. This includes stamp sales, package pick up, special services and money order sales.
13. **Concern:**
- Customers were concerned about the limited hours of operation at the Post Office.
- Response:**
- Postmaster level and office service hours are determined by a workload analysis which includes the number of deliveries and revenue. A workload analysis indicated the office level had declined and qualified for for less hours of service per week. Carrier service will provide 24-hour access to the mail.
14. **Concern:**
- Customer suggested reducing/alternating the number of hours the post office operates.
- Response:**
- Hours are determined by the workload at the post office.
15. **Concern:**
- Customer suggested reducing/alternating the number of hours the post office operates.
- Response:**
- Hours are determined by the workload at the post office. Also, placement of a curbside box will be determined by the administrative office. Any questions about location can be worked out with the Postmaster.
16. **Concern:**
- Customer suggested reducing/alternating the number of hours the post office operates.
- Response:**
- Hours are determined by the workload at the post office. The hours at the Viola Post Office currently accomodate their workload.
17. **Concern:**
- Customers said they would miss the special attention and assistance provided by the personnel at the Post Office.
- Response:**
- Courteous and helpful service will be provided by personnel at the administrative Post Office and from the carrier. Special assistance will be provided as needed.
18. **Concern:**
- Customers were concerned about senior citizens.
- Response:**
- Carrier service is beneficial to many senior citizens and those who face special challenges because the carrier can provide delivery and retail services to roadside mailboxes or Centralized Box Units. Customers do not have to make a special trip to the Post Office for service. Special provisions are made for hardship cases or special customer needs. To request an exception for hardship delivery, customers may contact the administrative postmaster for more information.
19. **Concern:**
- Customer was concerned that the decision to suspend had already been made.
- Response:**
- It was explained that this was the beginning of the process.
20. **Concern:**
- Customers asked why their Post Office was being discontinued while others were retained.
- Response:**
- Post Offices are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. When there is a vacancy in a small office, it is customary to conduct a study of the business activity and investigate the feasibility of providing service by alternate means.
21. **Concern:**
- Customers inquired about the location of the CPO.
- Response:**
- The CPO will be located in the community. Convenience of location and accessibility will be considered in evaluating the bids and award of the contract.
22. **Concern:**
- Customers inquired about what hours and services would be provided by the CPO.
- Response:**
- The CPO will be contracted to provide at least the same hours as the present Post Office. Depending on the location, the CPO may provide expanded lobby hours. Services will be the same as provided at the Post Office, except for permit mail acceptance.
23. **Concern:**
- Customers were concered why the postmaster position was not filled.

Response:

All management positions were frozen in anticipation of the reorganization efforts.

24. **Concern:**

Customers were concerned about obtaining accountable mail and large parcels.

Response:

If the customer lives less than one-half mile from the line of travel, the carrier will attempt delivery of accountable items and large parcels to the customer's residence. If the customer lives over one-half mile away or is not home when delivery is attempted, a notice will be left in the mailbox. Large parcels will be left outside the mailbox or at a location designated by the customer (if authorized by the customer), or a notice will be left in the mailbox. Attempted delivery items will be taken back to the Post Office. Customers may pick up the item at the Post Office or request redelivery online at usps.com or by calling 1-800-ASK-USPS.

Some advantages of the proposal are:

1. The rural and contract carriers may provide retail services, alleviating the need to go to the post office. Stamps by Mail order forms are provided for customer convenience.
2. Customers opting for carrier service will have 24-hour access to their mail.
3. Savings for the Postal Service contribute in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.
4. CBUs can offer the security of individually locked mail compartments. Parcel lockers provide convenient parcel delivery for customers.
5. Customers opting for carrier service will not have to pay post office box fees.
6. Saves time and energy for customers who drive to the post office to pick up mail.

Some disadvantages of the proposal are:

1. The loss of a retail outlet. Retail services may be provided by the rural or contract delivery carrier.
2. Meeting the rural or contract delivery carrier at the box to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions.
3. A change in the mailing address. The community name will continue to be used in the new address. A carrier route address will be assigned.
4. A change in your PO Box Fees may be a result of this proposal.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service concludes this final determination will provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to the community.

II. EFFECT ON COMMUNITY

Viola is an unincorporated community located in LATAH County. The community is administered politically by Latah County Commissioner. Police protection is provided by the Latah County Sheriff. Fire protection is provided by the Moscow Rural Fire Dept. The community is comprised of This community is comprised of retirees, farmers, loggers, commuters and ranchers. There is no employment in town, and those who commute to work at nearby communities and may work in local businesses.

Businesses and organizations include: There are no businesses in the service area. Residents may travel to nearby communities for other supplies and services.

Nonpostal services provided at the Viola Post Office will be available at the Moscow Post Office. Government forms normally provided by the Post Office will also be available at the Moscow Post Office or by contacting your local government agency.

The following nonpostal concerns were expressed from questionnaires, the community meeting, on the petition, and on the congressional inquiry:

1. **Concern:**

Customers expressed concern for loss of community identity

Response:

A community's identity derives from the interest and vitality of its residents and their use of its name. The Postal Service is helping to preserve community identity by continuing the use of the Community name and ZIP Code in addresses.

2. **Concern:**

Customers questioned the economic savings of the proposed discontinuance. Concern was also expressed that too much money was spent in the larger cities.

- Response:** Carrier service can be and, in this case, is more cost-effective than maintaining a postal facility and a postmaster position. The Postal Service estimates an annual savings with this change. Additional funds are necessary in larger cities because of a greater workload. Larger cities often realize greater revenue which can offset their greater expenses.
3. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about growth in the community.
- Response:** The growth of a community does **not depend on the** location of a Post Office. Based on information obtained by the Postal Service, it was determined that there has been **minimal growth in the area** in recent years. Carrier service will be able to **accommodate** future growth.
4. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about the loss of a gathering place and an information center.
- Response:** Residents may continue to meet informally, socialize, and share information at the other businesses, churches and residences in town.
5. **Concern:** Customers felt the Post Office should remain open since they paid taxes.
- Response:** The Postal Service is not supported by tax dollars and must meet expenses by revenue it generates. Operational savings for the Postal Service contributes in the long run to stable postage rates and savings for customers.
6. **Concern:** Customers were concerned about loss of employment in the community.
- Response:** The postmaster position is vacant and there is no guarantee that any replacement postmaster would be from the community.
7. **Concern:** Customer expressed a concern about leaving money in the mailbox.
- Response:** A questionnaire was sent to the postal inspection service concerning mail theft and vandalism in the area. Their records indicate that there has not been any report of mail theft or vandalism in the area. However, customers may place a note in their mailboxes instructing the carrier to sound their horn when they arrive, in order to transact financial business.
8. **Concern:** Customers expressed a concern about the loss of a bus stop at the Post Office.
- Response:** Customers may contact the county school board to determine if they would be willing to erect a small building, which would shelter children from the wind while they wait on the school bus. Or contact neighboring businesses to ascertain if they would allow children to wait on the bus at their business.

Based on the information obtained in the course of this discontinuance study, the Postal Service concludes this final determination will not adversely affect the community.

III. EFFECT ON EMPLOYEES

The postmaster position became vacant when the postmaster retired on August 31, 2003. The noncareer postmaster relief (PMR) may be separated from the Postal Service. No other Postal Service employee will be adversely affected. Since the postmaster vacancy an OIC has been installed to operate the office.

IV. ECONOMIC SAVINGS

The Postal Service estimates an annual savings of \$ 28,873 with a breakdown as follows

Postmaster Salary (EAS-55, No COLA)	\$ 23,025
Fringe Benefits @ 33.5%	\$ 7,713
Annual Lease Costs	<u>+ \$ 3,418</u>
Total Annual Costs	\$ 34,156
Less Annual Cost of Replacement Service	<u>- \$ 5,283</u>
Total Annual Savings	<u>\$ 28,873</u>

A one-time expense of \$ 6000 will be incurred for the movement of this facility.

V. OTHER FACTORS

The Postal Service has identified no other factors for consideration.

VI. SUMMARY

This is the final determination to close the Viola, ID Post Office and provide delivery and retail services by rural route service under the administrative responsibility of the Moscow Post Office, located seven miles away. Service will be provided to cluster box units (CBUs).

The postmaster retired on August 31, 2003. If the office has a noncareer PMR(s), they may be separated from the Postal Service; however, attempts will be made to reassign the employee(s) to a nearby facility. No other employee(s) will be adversely affected. The mail volume has declined. Effective and regular service will continue to be provided by rural route service.

The Viola Post Office provided delivery and retail service to 54 PO Box or general delivery customers and no delivery route customers. The daily retail window transactions averaged nine. There are one permit mailers or postage meter customers.

There will no longer be a retail outlet in the community. However, delivery and retail services may be available from a rural or contract delivery carrier, which could alleviate the need to travel to a Post Office for service. The Postal Service will save an estimated \$28,873 annually. A disadvantage to some will be in meeting the rural or contract delivery carrier to transact business. However, it is not necessary to be present to conduct most Postal Service transactions with rural or contract delivery carrier.

Taking all available information into consideration, the Postal Service has determined that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages and this final determination is warranted.

VII. NOTICES

- A. Support Materials. Copies of all materials upon which this final determination is based are available for public inspection at the Viola Post Office, Palouse Post Office and Moscow Post Office during normal office hours.
- B. Appeal Rights. This final determination to close the Viola Post Office may be appealed by any person served by that office to the Postal Regulatory Commission at 901 New York Ave NW, Suite 200, Washington DC 20268-0001. Appeals must be received by the Commission within 30 days of the date this final determination is posted. If an appeal is filed, copies of appeal documents prepared by the Postal Regulatory Commission or the parties to the appeal will be made available for public inspection at Viola Post Office, Palouse Post Office and Moscow Post Office during normal office hours.



Dean J. Granholm
Vice President of Delivery and Post Office Operations

10/11/2011

Date